Chapter 10
Community Visioning

Phase 3, Task 3.1
Shoreline Master Program Planning Process

Introduction

Developing a community vision for the local shoreline is part of the public participation process for Shoreline Master Program (SMP) updates. The Shoreline Management Act (SMA) directs local governments and Ecology to "actively encourage participation" by all interested parties in the shoreline management planning process [RCW 90.58. 130].

Public participation should begin early in the SMP amendment process. During the early stages, participants should be encouraged to share what they value about shorelines and issues they would like the SMP to address. These early activities may include interviews, surveys, workshops or other techniques that will help to frame the inventory and characterization and SMP update process. (See SMP Handbook Chapter 6, *Public Participation*.)

> *"Community visioning is a term to describe community ideals and dreams that get turned into manageable and realistic community goal statements." (Washington Department of Commerce.)*

Local governments that receive grant funds from Ecology for comprehensive SMP updates must also conduct a community visioning process and prepare a report that summarizes the community visioning activities and discusses community goals for the shoreline. (The SMP Guidelines do not require a separate community visioning process.) This task, Task 3.1 of the Shoreline Master Program Planning Process, is part of the public participation process and should be included in the public participation plan.

This chapter discusses the purpose of community visioning and when it should occur, reviews techniques, offers tips for community visioning events, explains requirements for a community visioning report, and provides a link to shoreline visualization software. Community visioning experiences for several jurisdictions is provided, as well as two examples of survey forms used by local governments.

Overview of community visioning

Community visioning should occur part way through the SMP process, at the beginning of Phase 3, and focus on the community's goals and aspirations for the shoreline within the context of the SMA, the SMP Guidelines and local shoreline conditions.

The Municipal Research and Services Center of Washington, a not-for-profit organization that provides research and support services to local governments, offers this view of community visioning:

> *A community vision document captures the "big picture" dreams, aspirations, and hopes of your community. Important community values shape this vision. A thoughtful "vision statement" can provide one of the elements needed to form a forward looking strategic framework that gives councils the "long-term-comprehensive" perspective necessary to make more rational and disciplined tactical/incremental decisions on community issues as they arise. (http://www.mrsc.org/subjects/governance/comvision.aspx, 12/2010)*

Purpose

The purposes of the community visioning task are:

- Gain an understanding of the common shorelines interests held by participants.

- Give the public an opportunity to review and understand the framework for the SMP update. This includes the shoreline conditions discussed in the Inventory and Characterization report, the statewide interests expressed by the SMA, and the requirements of the SMP Guidelines, including the standard to achieve no net loss of shoreline ecological conditions.

- Identify community goals and aspirations for local shorelines within this framework.

- Help to develop shoreline environment designation criteria, policies, uses and regulations.

A community visioning process provides an opportunity to enhance knowledge about shoreline conditions and shoreline management issues and brainstorm possible solutions. It may encourage public participation in the SMP amendment process. Residents and shoreline users may provide information about shoreline history and problems, such as flooding. It can also provide a chance to learn about shoreline processes and functions and projects that are underway or planned in the community.

Timeline

Community visioning should occur after the SMP shoreline inventory and characterization (Chapter 7, Inventory and Characterization) is complete. A visioning process should be conducted in light of the local SMP shoreline inventory and characterization findings and

recommendations so participants are knowledgeable about shoreline conditions, problems and opportunities. These findings, combined with information about the SMA and SMP Guidelines, also provide a factual framework for participants thinking about and discussing their shoreline's future. This will help avoid situations where participants become committed to proposals that conflict with the SMA or SMP Guidelines or ignore existing shoreline conditions.

Bringing visioning products to the SMP planning table at this stage in the process will:

- Enrich the SMP planning process.
- Make sure all known relevant issues are addressed.
- Help to achieve consistency among all local plans and regulations

Community visioning techniques

Public participation is essential to the shoreline planning process and community visioning is one element of public participation. Local governments use community visioning for comprehensive, neighborhood, and sub-area planning as well as shoreline planning.

A community visioning process may include a variety of activities organized and facilitated by the local and state shoreline planners, consultants or facilitators, planning commission or citizen advisory group. The Department of Commerce publication, *Shaping Washington's Growth Management Future - Citizen Participation and Community Visioning Guide*, suggests the following activities for community visioning activities. These can be tailored for the SMP update. See the Guide for more ideas and details.

- Going to the "Balcony" – Ask participants to use their imagination to "view" the community from the tallest building or a bluff overlooking the community. For shoreline purposes, ask people to "view" the shoreline area from an upland and water level viewpoint that they're familiar with.

- Walking tours – Focus on what's on the ground and opportunities for change. If boats can be arranged, schedule a boat tour, so people can see the shoreline from the water.

- Photo gallery – Develop an online or bulletin board display of photos submitted by residents and shoreline users. This can help trigger discussions of potential future uses, public access opportunities, and areas that need protection.

- Polls – Measure attitudes, behaviors and attributes with surveys, telephone or personal interviews and focus groups.

- Attitudinal surveys – Assess perceptions and get an understanding of community values by asking people to respond to a series of statements using a scale. For example, use a "agree or disagree" type scale.

- Surveys – use open-ended surveys to learn about people's visions for the future.

- Small group visioning process – Ask small groups of 8-10 people to develop a vision for the future. Ask group members to write an answer to a question or idea related to shorelines. Ask members to share their ideas and write them on a flip chart. After discussion, ask the group to come up with a vision statement. Small group processes must be well-organized and facilitated. See the Guide for more details.

The Municipal Research and Services Center of Washington has additional resources about community visioning on its website at http://www.mrsc.org/subjects/governance/comvision.aspx.

Tips for community visioning

Following are some tips for carrying out community visioning activities. See Chapter 6, Public Participation, Attachment 2, for a checklist of tasks for public participation activities.

Who to invite

Invite and engage as many interests as possible in community visioning. Include the general public; Indian tribes; local, state, and federal agencies with shoreline management responsibility; port districts; individuals with expertise; and local business, commercial, recreational, environmental and other interest groups.

The visioning process is a good opportunity to involve port districts. Port master plans generally include areas within shoreline jurisdiction. They also may include areas that are outside, but adjacent to shoreline jurisdiction. The earlier you identify possible use conflicts or differences of opinion about shoreline issues, the better the chance to avoid inconsistencies between a port master plan and local SMP.

Invite local, state, or federal agency staff with knowledge of shoreline conditions, and knowledgeable members of special interest groups or other experts to speak, facilitate small groups or otherwise participate in the visioning session.

> *(WAC 173-26-201(2)(a): The requirement to use scientific and technical information in these guidelines does not limit a local jurisdiction's authority to solicit and incorporate information, experience, and anecdotal evidence provided by interested parties as part of the master program amendment process. Such information should be solicited through the public participation process described in WAC 173-26-201 (3)(b). Where information collected by or provided to local governments conflicts or is inconsistent, the local government shall base*

Give participants an opportunity to share their knowledge of local shorelines, including its history. Ask them to bring in maps or other documents for the group to review. Shoreline residents and users often will hear information about shoreline processes, functions and management issues better from respected members of the community than from staff. The visioning process provides an excellent opportunity for community education about connections within shoreline systems. For example, constructing a bulkhead may cause erosion of a neighboring property's beach or may interfere with beach processes. Or, planting vegetation may reduce erosion and improve water quality.

Ask participants about their ideas and goals for local shorelines. Encourage creative thinking.

4

What to bring

Provide visual materials and handouts that describe existing and historic shoreline conditions.

- Maps showing shoreline jurisdiction, critical areas, floodplains, city boundaries, road and other infrastructure, shoreline uses, historic sites and other relevant maps.
- Findings and recommendations from the inventory and characterization report.
- Photographs of the historic and current shoreline that show changes over time and identify locations of former wetlands, dumpsites, or shoreline uses. These can be useful for developing restoration plans.
- Drawings and diagrams of potential developments to help to identify future shoreline uses.
- Slide shows with photographs of the current shoreline to give participants a sense of place.
- Computer stations with GIS layers for the entire shoreline and down to the parcel level.

Other materials that will be useful include:

- Copies of the SMA and SMP guidelines.
- Local policy and regulatory documents, such as the comprehensive plan, critical areas ordinance and flood hazard management plan, for example.
- Other plans relevant to shoreline jurisdiction such as port master plans or tribal plans.

For boat or walking tours, it is cumbersome to bring along many materials. Small handheld maps can help people orient to the section of the shoreline they are viewing.

Other tips

Suggestions for conducting community visioning activities include:

- Clearly identify the objectives of the community visioning exercises with staff before the meeting and with participants.
- Establish ground rules for exercises and discussions for comfortable and safe discussion.
- Develop a format or protocol for receiving information at public events, through the mail or via Internet or email. Chapter 6, *Public Participation*, has basic information about managing public comments.
- Explain to participants how their input will be used in the SMP update process.
- Distribute the results of visioning and other public participation activities right away so people know they have been heard.

Visioning report

After the community visioning activities are complete, local government should prepare a community visioning report. This report should at minimum include:

- Community visioning activities. Include a short description of each activity, location, how many people participated and how participants engaged in each activity, and stakeholder groups represented. Include an agenda, copies of handouts and presentations and other materials

- A summary of the feedback received from participants. If the number of comments or returned surveys is small, the report may include all comments and survey results. However, that's not necessary when including all the responses would make the report unwieldy. Blank versions of surveys and questionnaires and other materials used to gain feedback should be included.

- Goals for shoreline management based on the public input. Goals should be within the parameters of the SMA and the SMP Guidelines. Do participants want more public access and recreation on the shoreline? Do they want industry to expand? Have they suggested shoreline areas for protection or restoration?

The report should be used to help draft goals, policies, regulations, environment designations, and opportunities for resource protection, public access and restoration. For example, participants may focus on future use and restoration of an urban shoreline, or coordination of local, state and federal regulations to help restore water quality at a swimming beach closed because of contamination. Community visioning can help determine appropriate shoreline uses.

During the community visioning process, participants may discuss other actions or recommendations, such as those listed below. These should be included in the community visioning report.

- Suggested changes to other local land use policies regulations that have an impact on the shoreline, e.g. the comprehensive plan, stormwater management plan, or flood hazard regulations. This will help achieve the mandate in *RCW 90.58.340* requiring local plans and regulations for lands adjacent to the shoreline be consistent with the SMP.
- Policies to reduce incompatibility of different shoreline uses.
- Public improvements that support shoreline use.
- Public acquisition of critical areas, parks and open spaces or other ways to protect and restore these resources, including areas outside shoreline jurisdiction.
- Stormwater quality improvements.
- Development of, or improvements to, waterfront recreation features.

Visualizing shoreline alternatives

Visual simulations can help planners, stakeholders and decision-makers understand the impacts of shoreline protection and development alternatives. Photographs or sketches alone don't allow viewers to fully visualize a bay at build-out, with a house, boat house and dock on every shoreline lot; an urban waterfront with new high-rise buildings lining the shoreline; or a derelict lakeshore marina replaced with a public park and a thriving buffer planted with native vegetation.

Seeing realistic representations of how each shoreline alternative will look "on the ground" not only stimulates community interest and participation in the SMP update process, but also helps your decision-makers make more informed decisions.

This example is from the Coastal Services Center website. The first photo shows a pond in Falmouth, Massachusetts. The CanVis visualization shows the visual outcome of proposed changes to dock and pier regulations. (Images courtesy of Massachusetts Office of Coastal Zone Management.)

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Coastal Services Center provides an invaluable visual software tool called "CanVis" originally developed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Available free of charge via the Coastal Services Center website (www.csc.noaa.gov/canvis), CanVis allows local governments to illustrate the visual effect of various shoreline protection, development and restoration scenarios using their own shoreline photographs.

CanVis allows those with minimal computer skills to develop realistic simulations of shoreline changes. Object libraries with images of plants, agricultural features, people, wildlife, and park elements can be added to a base image. Color, contrast, and shadow can be adjusted. With advanced features that require additional computer skills, users can remove existing elements from photographs, add topographical features, and modify textures.

Community visioning examples

City of Kirkland

The City of Kirkland's visioning process consisted of two, two-day forums. During the first day, the City's staff explained inventory and characterization findings and the SMP update process, and solicited input from participants. The second day was devoted to site visits to illustrate particular shoreline features or issues. The City's goals for the workshops included:

- Advise participants why the SMP update was needed and about the issues to be addressed.
- Hear from the participants about their interests and concerns and what's important regarding the waterfront.
- Identify common interests of the City and participants in protecting the waterfront.

The forum agendas and summary of suggestions are available at http://www.kirklandwa.gov/depart/Planning/Code_Updates/Shoreline_Master_Program_Update.htm. Scroll down to "Summary of key themes, issues and citizens' suggestions" under "City."

Douglas County and cities

Douglas County and the cities of East Wenatchee, Rock Island and Bridgeport held four open houses (from 4 to 6 p.m.) and two workshops (6:30 to 8:30 p.m.) in different locations around the County. In addition, they conducted two "Listening Posts" at a regional mall where people were invited to look at a shoreline map and photograph display, pick up informational handouts and talk with county and city staff.

Participants in these events provided input on a long-term vision for the County's shorelines with respect to public physical and visual access (views); recreation and conservation opportunities; allowable uses for shorelands and shoreline waters; population growth projections; resource carrying capacity; residential, commercial and industrial uses; agriculture; special shoreline qualities; and effective planning, regulations and enforcement. *Citizen's Vision for Douglas County Shorelines 2006-2016* summarizes the comments received at the open houses and Listening Posts and vision developed at the workshops.

Clallam County

Clallam County is using a community visioning process to focus on various geographic areas of the County and specific SMP topics. The report can be reviewed at: http://www.clallam.net/RealEstate/assets/applets/ClallamSMP_Vision_Report_Draft_6-27-11.pdf

Focus group meetings were held in January 2011 and regional public forums in April 2011. Topics included the unique features of Clallam County shorelines that people value, what has been getting better, and what has been getting worse. Topics at the April forums included three

8

issues of particular interest— marine shoreline development, flood plains, and emerging issues related to public access.

Clallam County's draft Vision Statement "reflects the shared history of local residents and their ideas and goals about how to accommodate change in the future." (*Clallam County Shorelines In Transition: A Vision Statement for the Clallam County Shoreline Master Program Update*. ESA, June 27, 2011.)

Clark County and cities

The Clark County project management team developing a regional SMP update includes representatives of Clark County and the cities of Battleground, Camas, La Center, Ridgefield, Vancouver, Washougal and Yacolt. The project management team held three public visioning meetings in March 2010 as part of the public participation activities for the SMP update.

The visioning meetings opened with a presentation on the SMP update steps, the public involvement process, and the shoreline inventory and characterization report. Participants then filled out one questionnaire for each of three maps on display. Questions addressed property ownership, type (fishing, walking, biking, boating, or viewing) and amount of shoreline use, what's valued, vision for shoreline, and greatest concern for the shoreline.

Using the input from the community and the results of the inventory and characterization report, the project management team developed a shoreline management strategy. The strategy provides an overall approach for the following elements of the SMP update: economic development, public access and recreation, circulation, shoreline uses, conservation and restoration, cultural and historic, and flood damage prevention. For each element, the strategy outlines a general approach and suggests sample goals. The management strategy is available at http://www.cityofvancouver.us/shorelineupdate/documents.htm. Scroll down to "Management Strategy – June 2011."

Thurston County

Thurston County hosted five public workshops around the County in April and May of 2008, and four more in March 2009. Their purpose was to gather information and hear opinions from County residents about revising the County SMP under the SMP Guidelines requirements.

County shoreline staff and the County's consultant gave presentations about the SMA and SMP Guidelines requirements. After the presentations, the meetings continued in a workshop format with about 6-8 people per table. The kick-off survey included questions about favorite shoreline areas, frequency of use, favorite shoreline activities, prioritized local shoreline "problems" and possible solutions, and aspirations for state, county, and local area shorelines and ideas on how to accomplish them.

The four meetings in March 2009 encouraged residents to share their views and concerns about how the eight elements listed in the SMA [RCW 90.58.100] should be addressed in the SMP. County residents were invited to help craft policies for these elements: economic development;

public access; recreation; circulation; land uses; conservation; historic, cultural, scientific, and educational; and flood damage prevention. Participants were asked to help determine if and where appropriate shoreline locations may be available for these elements. Information gathered at these events is being used by the County and State shoreline planning staff, County Planning Commission, and elected officials to inform the SMP amendment process.

Records of these meetings are available at the County website at http://www.co.thurston.wa.us/planning/shoreline/shoreline_status.htm

City of Seattle

The City of Seattle surveyed 400 Seattle to elicit opinions about shorelines. The results provide general information useful for determining where to create more public access, addressing water quality issues, and assessing shoreline development intensity.

Surveyors asked adult heads of household what shorelines they visited, frequency of their shoreline visits, their activities at the shoreline, and challenges to the future of Seattle shorelines. Of those polled, 44 percent said they visited a Seattle shoreline once or more per week.

The City also designed and facilitated seven community visioning workshops to engage residents in developing a holistic vision for Seattle shorelines and establish objectives for future policy work. City staff provided information about the SMP update and the shoreline inventory. Participants met in small groups and discussed issues and opportunities for the local shorelines as well as shorelines citywide.

The Vision Report identifies a range of visions and views for the city as a whole, as well as each of six shoreline sub-regions (Elliott Bay, Duwamish River, Lake Union/Ship Canal, Lake Washington, Puget Sound, and Green Lake). The Vision Report results were considered during development of the draft Seattle SMP goals, policies and regulations. The report is available at http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/planning/shorelinemasterprogramupdate/reportsmaterials/default.asp. Scroll down to "Draft Vision Report."

Cities of North Bend and Shelton

Following are examples of community visioning questionnaires from the cities of North Bend and Shelton.

Vision Questionnaire

Shoreline Master Program Update ▪ October 2010

Welcome to the North Bend Shoreline Master Program Vision Workshop. Please answer the following questions to help develop North Bend's shoreline vision. You can leave this questionnaire at the sign-in station or with City staff at the end of the meeting or mail it back to the City contact shown on the last page.

Public Access

1. **How do you currently use North Bend shorelines? Mark all that apply.**

Middle Fork Snoqualmie	South Fork Snoqualmie
☐ View points	☐ View points
☐ Trails	☐ Trails
☐ Parks or recreation areas	☐ Parks or recreation areas
☐ Community events	☐ Community events
☐ Boating	☐ Boating
☐ Canoeing/ Kayaking/Rafting	☐ Canoeing/ Kayaking/Rafting
☐ Fishing	☐ Fishing
☐ Swimming	☐ Swimming
☐ Other _____	☐ Other _____

2. **How do you feel about your level of *visual* access to North Bend's shorelines?**

Middle Fork Snoqualmie	South Fork Snoqualmie
Visual Access	
☐ There are ample visual opportunities.	☐ There are ample visual opportunities.
☐ There are some visual opportunities but I wish there were more.	☐ There are some visual opportunities but I wish there were more.
☐ There should be many more visual opportunities.	☐ There should be many more visual opportunities.
Physical Access	
☐ There are ample physical opportunities.	☐ There are ample physical opportunities.
☐ There are some physical opportunities but I wish there were more.	☐ There are some physical opportunities but I wish there were more.
☐ There should be many more physical opportunities.	☐ There should be many more physical opportunities.

3. **In what other locations should additional or improved public access be provided?**

☐ Middle Fork Snoqualmie

_____

_____

_____

☐ South Fork Snoqualmie

_____

_____

_____

4. **What location is your top pick for providing additional or improved public access along North Bend shorelines?**

_____

_____

_____

Shoreline Use & Development

5. **What types of shoreline uses do you typically enjoy along the shoreline?**

☐ I live on the shoreline and access it directly from my residence

☐ I work near the shoreline and enjoy seeing it

☐ I access North Bend shorelines at trails, view points, parks, etc.

☐ Other

_____

_____

1

6. **What are the types of future uses you would like to see in North Bend for enjoying shorelines?**

☐ Boating, rafting, or other water-recreation equipment rentals

☐ Concessions (food and/or recreation oriented businesses)

☐ Restaurants with outside dining and/or shoreline visual access

☐ Development with visual access to shorelines

☐ Other

_____

_____

Shoreline Restoration

7. **Which shoreline locations have natural areas that you feel should be:**

Protected or Preserved	Restored
☐ Middle Fork Snoqualmie	☐ Middle Fork Snoqualmie
☐ South Fork Snoqualmie	☐ South Fork Snoqualmie

Please provide information about particular locations for protection or restoration:

☐ Middle Fork Snoqualmie

_____

_____

☐ South Fork Snoqualmie

_____

_____

8. **How should these natural areas be protected?**

Middle Fork Snoqualmie	South Fork Snoqualmie
☐ Volunteer actions	☐ Volunteer actions
☐ Regulations	☐ Regulations
☐ Purchase	☐ Purchase
☐ Easements	☐ Easements
☐ Other _____	☐ Other _____

9. **Who should be responsible for shoreline restoration?**

☐ Private property owners

☐ Governmental entities

☐ Joint efforts of private and public

☐ Private developers

☐ Other

_____

_____

10. **Are you interested in being contacted about volunteering for future restoration activities?**

☐ Yes

☐ No

If yes, how can we contact you?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Other

11. **Do you have any other thoughts you'd like to share with us?**

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Thank you! Your responses will help support the enjoyment of city shorelines now and in the future.

Please leave your completed questionnaire at the end of the meeting or return it to:

Jamie Burrell
Senior Planner
City of North Bend
126 East Fourth Street
P.O. Box 896
North Bend, WA 98045
425-888-7642-p
425-888-5636-f
jburrell@northbendwa.gov

2

CITY OF SHELTON SHORELINE MASTER PROGRAM UPDATE

The City of Shelton is updating its Shoreline Master Program and would like to hear from you!

1. Do you live near a *designated shoreline*? Designated shorelines within the City and its urban growth area include: Oakland Bay, Goldsborough Creek, Island Lake, Goose Lake, and portions of Johns Creek and Mill Creek.

   Yes ☐   No ☐

2. How do you use the shorelines (walking, jogging, swimming, boating, observing nature, etc.)?

3. What do you most value about city *shorelines*?

4. If you could, what would you change about them?

5. Your thoughts on **protecting** the shoreline environment:
   — How well are existing shoreline regulations working?
   — Are there certain shorelines that should be better protected?

6. Your ideas for **enhancing shorelines**:
   — Are there degraded areas that should be enhanced or restored?
   — Any suggestions for how to enhance degraded areas?

page 1 of 2

PUBLIC COMMENTS (CONTINUED)

7. Your suggestions for improving **physical** or **visual public access** to shorelines:

— Is there adequate access to use and enjoy the shorelines in Shelton?

— If not, what should the City do (for example, purchase property, build trails, expand existing parks)?

— Are there areas where public access is causing problems? If so, what should be done?

_____
_____
_____
_____

8. Your ideas to help the City plan for **shoreline uses**:

— Does the City currently allow the appropriate mix of shoreline uses?

— What type of uses and activities should the City promote?

— What type of new activities should be limited or prohibited?

— Should the City place limits on expansion of existing uses?

_____
_____
_____
_____

9. Your thoughts on **private property rights** within shoreline areas:

— Do current regulations protect private property rights adequately?

— If not, how should the City further protect property rights?

_____
_____
_____
_____

10. In what way(s) would you prefer to be contacted (email, phone, or mail)?

Name: _____

Email address: _____ Phone number: _____

Mailing address: _____

11. How do you think we should contact others in order to keep them informed and to encourage broad participation in the Shoreline Master Program update process?

_____
_____
_____

page 2 of 2

14